

The Drug Factor

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Office of Drug Control Policy

Prevention ~ Treatment ~ Enforcement

Substance Abuse Treatment Reduces Crime

“Substance abuse treatment is more cost effective than prison or other punitive measures.”

The Justice Policy Institute (JPI) released information on January 22, 2008 indicating that substance abuse treatment reduces crime rates and helps reduce corrections costs. The study indicates that the increased availability of substance abuse treatment improves public safety.

Since 1997, the Justice Policy Institute has worked to enhance the public dialog on incarceration through accessible research, public education and communications advocacy.

The Substance Abuse Treatment and Public Safety brief is the last in a series published in January,

2008. The study found that “the sooner substance abuse is treated, the bigger the long-term cost savings and increase in public safety.” The brief further indicates that substance abuse treatment helps the currently incarcerated inmate transition from incarceration to independent living successfully.

“If lawmakers invest in community-based substance abuse treatment instead of prison beds for people living with addiction, our communities will reap tremendous benefits,” stated JPI Executive Director Sheila Bedi. The full report can be found at www.justicepolicy.org/.



Increased admissions to drug treatment are associated with reduced incarceration rates

Upcoming Events

Action with Heart—
4/17/08—Barren River
State Park

KY School of Alcohol and
Other Drug Studies—July
20, 2008—NKU

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Justice and Public Safety Cabinet

Office of Drug Control Policy

125 Holmes Street
Frankfort, KY 40601
502-564-9564—Phone
502-564-6104—Fax
www.odcp.ky.gov
Executive Director
Bill Patrick



Washington State Sees Dramatic Savings

The JPI brief indicates that in counties that the relied on drug treatment were more likely to achieve significant crime rate reductions than those that relied on incarceration.

Washington State saw an estimated \$18.52 return to the community for every dollar spent on substance abuse treatment. The benefits were seen in the in the reduction in incarceration

and associated crime costs. Further social costs are captured in the reunification of families, improved physical and mental health and improved labor force.